

7-13-67

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

I know there is a lot of suspicion against Johnson and he's certainly on my list of suspects. He's a natural - having the most to gain - and since he is also the one man with the power to see that the case is solved and since he will not do it, he is chiefly responsible for the fact that he's on the list. I make no apologies. What follows however is not an accusation against Johnson but an exercise in reasoning from a hypothesis. In other words, if Johnson were guilty, what light could this shed on the mechanics of the assassination?

The first fact to consider is that Johnson was riding in the motorcade in an open car about 15 yards behind the President. He was in almost exactly the same position in his open Lincoln as Kennedy was in his. Where Kennedy was, Johnson would be in about 5 seconds: in exactly the same spot. It is not after all a matter of yards - or space. It is a matter of a very few seconds - a fraction of time. You breathe once in about five seconds. What if the trigger finger should stutter?

It therefore seems reasonable to me to suggest that if Johnson was in on the plot, there was no sort of triangulation of fire involving rifles from before or behind or to the right or left of the President's car: for the simple fact that Johnson himself would be in that exact same spot in five seconds. We know Johnson's famous penchant for plenty of life insurance. Would he trust the greatest marksman in the world to miss him by five seconds? He would not.

If Johnson were in on the plot there is only one place he would conceivably have placed a gunman to afford the maximum possibility of getting Kennedy and no possibility of getting himself: in front of his Lincoln and behind Kennedy's, firing forward. And this gunman would not be stationary, for in five seconds he would have been firing not forward at Kennedy but forward at Johnson. In short, if Johnson was in on the plot, he would have placed a gunman just about exactly where I have previously indicated I suspect one to have been on the basis of other evidence.

Also, suppose Johnson had set about to concoct a plot to get Kennedy. Since he would automatically become the chief suspect, there was one sure way of obviating suspicion: that was to appear to have been in danger himself. He would have had to be in the motorcade, instead of home sick in bed which any respectable assassin would prefer. But if he was in the motorcade he would have to be 100 percent sure that he and his lady were absolutely safe. Only a gunman in front of him firing forward could afford him safety. Then he would have appeared to have been in danger by ducking, etc. If Johnson is guilty he went a little too far in clutching himself in such a fashion as to make reporters think he had been wounded; still the first impression given the nation is important. That more than anything else led people to assume that Johnson had been in danger. In that case, the medal to Youngblood would have been a little more stage management.

Also, if you are an insider, you can't let it appear to be an insider's murder. It has to look like an outsider's murder. Poison is out. Grenades would be ideal - but not if you are in the motorcade. You are left with pistols - an insider's weapon or the weapon of a sacrificial lamb. And who would give their life for you. Rifles are the natural weapon for outsiders.

But with rifles they might hit you. But you are used to getting the best of all possible worlds: you will appear to use ~~xxxxxxx~~ rifles but actually you will use a pistol in close.

As for the rest of the plot, you will make this look like a leftwing assassination. The layer underneath that will look like a rightwing assassination, just in case the top one falls of its own sheer improbability (which in fact it did). (Remember you like insurance.) And you will certainly use other people to do the dirty work for you: Cuban refugees, rightwing, gangsterdom, the paramilitary, a dissident wing of the CIA. In fact this second level of the plot which Garrison is getting at - probably the people who pulled off all the hocus pocus with rifles, firecrackers, milling around, etc. - the guerilla operation may have been calculated to substitute for the failure of the Oswald-Hidell-FPCC as fall guys.

Above all, as part of the original plot, you will consummate the coup immediately. Everyone has fallen all over themselves to congratulate Johnson on his swift and consummate skill in grasping the "reins of power." But if Johnson were guilty, it makes very good sense too. He did move like lightning to consolidate his position: the fast move to Air Force One where the "controls" were and the immediate removal to Washington to occupy the seat of government. The act of taking ten minutes out to take the oath would have been conceived as part of the original plot. He would have been president anyway but if the assassination went wrong in the aftermath, which it did, someone might have quibbled. It would have been crucially important to assume the formal trappings immediately. The minute he was sworn in he was fully and formally President. And he was safe. And his associates were safe.

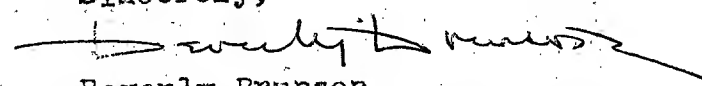
This is just idle speculation - no doubt - a good basis for a fiction. Perhaps you will not mind getting away from the evidence long enough to read it.

On the other hand there is this much that is serious in it: I am inviting anyone who thinks Johnson was in on the plot ~~xxxxxxx~~ and who simultaneously thinks there was a triangulation of gunfire to give up one or the other of the suppositions. They don't go together, in my opinion.

( p. 159 of his magnum opus)

Manchester, by the way, seems to have found out, as I deduced, that the cyclist riding the right rear fender of the President's limosine did bolt the motorcade immediately after the shots were fired. This would have been just as Mrs. Kennedy did come over the right trunk toward his position reaching, or pointing. I wonder if she told Manchester of this curious incident? Curiously enough though, Manchester says the man was Clyde Haygood. Haygood was no where near the right rear fender. He was back on Houston street behind Marion Baker. It seems Manchester hasn't done his homework as well as I have for he as well as the rest of the world has apparently never heard the name of the man who rode the right rear fender six feet from the President.

Sincerely,

  
Beverly Brunson

I am looking forward very much to receiving your new book. I did read the article in the Times this Sunday. I pray to our Lady of the Universe and you may be sure that I harangue her quite a bit about your health and well being. They paid you a very high compliment when they called you an "insistent" critic. I would say "persistent." Persistency is a very great virtue. It is enormously difficult, entails enormous sacrifice; and separates the men from the boys, ultimately.